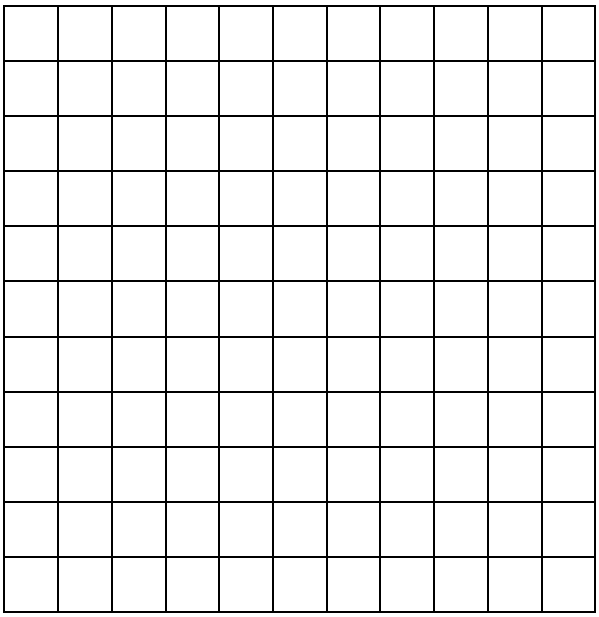
Puzzle #160 — September 2014 "Pianoforte"

Instructions: Guess the words defined by the cryptic clues (answers vary in length from four to eight letters, two are capitalized, and one is hyphenated) then enter them in the grid one after another in the same order as their clues, starting in the upper left corner. Across words that don't end at the right continue on the next row, and down words that don't end at the bottom continue in the next column. Two across words and two down words won't fit in the grid unless their letters are compacted in a certain way, solvers must determine how. In addition, eight across words and eight down words won't fit in the grid unless one of their letters is omitted. In each case, the eight letters spell a two-word phrase related to the compacted letters. Thanks to Kevin Wald for test-solving and editing this puzzle.



Across

1. Small group acquires navy transport
2. Satellite's ring is beginning to radiate in the early part of the day
3. Calm position about Austria
4. Deny Ben wrongly penetrates a barrier
5. Island has a tax
6. Carter, converted, holds out for God
7. Name of milk supplier is ultimately Hoot Gibson, perhaps
8. Part of Eddy Arnold's story
9. Air conditioned unit has energy for one
10. Dress is part of love story
11. Note: son returned as King of Crete
12. Cried anew for fruit juice
13. Best eastern drink
14. Starting to read hurt business
15. Enlarge a lot
16. Idiot embracing town salt maker
17. District includes new theater
18. Deceive with bad bluff holding ace and zilch
19. Eric enjoys eating cereal grains
20. Pain of love repelled
21. Picasso's mother gets rid of dead horse
22. Core of undervalued Gaelic poetry
23. Doctor Gibbon, perhaps, in cloth covering
24. Get ready to fly, starting from shelf
25. German ace's métier is flying

Down

1. Underground hollow in state inside China
2. Concept of Mideast
3. Tell about Ocean City move
4. Travel around end to get from a source
5. Uninitiated deviant upset indigene
6. Withdraw improper decree
7. Hat or head of plug being removed
8. Green, clumsy youth initiated activity
9. Celebrity-laden Sally's heart's with sailor
10. Having the means to hold disorder back and put things together
11. Hoyden polished my boot
12. Little monkey grabbing fruit
13. Effeminate behavior of topless rascal
14. Inspired rumors about returning to kill
15. East Ireland turned strange
16. Foreign confusion about Finland's first contribution
17. Woman one embraces at another time
18. Shock at rum being drunk before one
19. Shellfish spawn ejected
20. To run and to finish last would be wrong
21. Papa replaces back of tag for coat part
22. Incorrect count includes a tropical bird
23. Command of color derivatives